

# Catholic TRANSCRIPT

JULY/AUGUST 2020

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## WELCOME BACK!

*Reconnecting with God as Masses resume*

- STAYING HOPEFUL, PRAYERFUL AT HOME
- HELPING OTHERS DURING A PANDEMIC
- MINISTRY WELCOMES YOUNG FAMILIES TO CHURCH



# THE HARTFORD BISHOPS' FOUNDATION COMMITS FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE TO PARISHES AND MINISTRIES AMID COVID-19

Since mid-March, The Hartford Bishops' Foundation has partnered with the Archdiocese of Hartford to provide immediate support to Catholic parishes, schools and ministries in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The coronavirus has affected our world, our communities, and our way of life," says Jim Smith, general chairman of The Hartford Bishops' Foundation. "While sacramental life has by necessity been severely curtailed in our Archdiocese, our Foundation is committed to providing the necessary financial resources and personnel to support our parishes and ministries as they navigate through these unprecedented times."

To date, The Hartford Bishops' Foundation's COVID-19 response efforts have encompassed the following initiatives:

- The Foundation has established an **Emergency Response Fund** to gather and distribute emergency funds in support of the operational needs of parishes, schools and social service providers in response to the pandemic. The Foundation is currently securing funds for the ERF as quickly as possible and will soon inform pastors how parishes can apply for grants. **As of June 2020, the Foundation has raised more than \$400,000 toward the Fund.**
- Personnel from The Hartford Bishops' Foundation and its fundraising team, Changing Our World, are providing **direct support to approximately 100 parishes** to enhance their online giving, social media outreach and direct response capabilities to help restore their offertory collections. Parishioners throughout the Archdiocese have responded admirably to help meet the challenges the parishes now face.
- The Foundation launched a **Support Your Parish** initiative on its website to provide an opportunity for all parishioners to make special gifts directly to their parishes. **100% of all contributions given through this fund will go directly to parishes selected by the donors to provide supplemental offertory support.**

"I extend heartfelt thanks to those who have generously responded with financial support of our Emergency Response Fund, and to those who are considering joining us in this crucial endeavor," Smith says. "Your generosity at this moment in time will make an immediate difference in the communities we serve as we strive to meet their urgent and rapidly emerging needs. Our Foundation and our supporters stand with Archbishop Leonard P. Blair, our parishes and the Archdiocese as we work together to chart the course forward."

**TO LEARN MORE** about the Emergency Response Fund, please visit [hartfordbishopsfoundation.org](http://hartfordbishopsfoundation.org).

## ABOUT

### The Hartford Bishops' Foundation

Founded in 2016, The Hartford Bishops' Foundation is an independent, lay-governed 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to gathering and distributing financial resources to support projects, agencies and services that are integral to the long-term sustainability of the Archdiocese of Hartford and its impact in the wider community of Hartford, Litchfield and New Haven counties. The Foundation raises funds and directs strategic grants primarily within four areas of interest:

- **Investing** in local parish communities serving nearly 500,000 Catholics.
- **Enhancing** the teaching and learning environment for more than 50,000 students, teachers, priests and catechists in Catholic schools and parishes.
- **Fortifying** the programs and capabilities of social service providers that are serving thousands of individuals of all faiths.
- **Innovating** by supporting groundbreaking new programs and community partnerships that enable parishes and schools to engage with the broader community.

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Daily Masses in the Archdiocese of Hartford resumed on June 8.

PHOTO BY AARON JOSEPH



PHOTO BY KAREN A. AVITABILE



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# Welcome Back!



**KAREN AVITABILE**  
*is the editor of the*  
**Catholic Transcript.**

After Masses were suspended for nearly three months amid the coronavirus pandemic, we can finally pray in church as a community again. At the moment, the churches look different. And we look different — socially distanced and wearing masks.

For health reasons and to ensure churches do not exceed the capacity currently allowed, many people are unable to attend. But they continue to worship and stay connected with God at home by establishing prayer spaces, saying prayers at the foot of statues, praying the Rosary, watching Mass livestreamed by their local parish on Facebook and participating in daily Mass on television aired by ORTY. In this issue, we bring you stories of individuals and families who have broadened their faith journeys as a result of the pandemic.

Although stay-home restrictions are lifting in Connecticut, it is hard to tell any story right now that does not have a coronavirus angle. But this may be a good thing. In fact, a lot of great ideas, creativity, persistence and faith stories that are both inspirational and heart-warming have surfaced since the coronavirus outbreak. And they are definitely worth telling in this issue.

Some students in two Catholic schools are making a difference in the lives of others by voluntarily making face masks and extenders for front-line medical workers at Connecticut hospitals. And to lift the spirits of the sick diagnosed with the coronavirus in hospitals, dozens of other students crafted paper hearts with messages that read: "Stay strong," "Get well soon," "We can get through this together" and "God bless you."

Now more than ever, Catholic Charities has been upholding its mission: "Reflecting God's love, we partner with all to strengthen families and to inspire people to achieve their fullest potential" by working overtime and reaching more people during the coronavirus.



COURTESY OF ST. BRIDGET SCHOOL

Students from St. Bridget School in Cheshire crafted handmade hearts to cheer up COVID-19 patients at Waterbury Hospital.

The Catholic Biblical School, which is marking its 25th anniversary, is continuing its work of bringing adults into a closer relationship with Jesus Christ by successfully finishing out the semester in an online format.

God, Baby & Me, a ministry to better engage young families of babies and toddlers that was organized last year by Father Michael Santiago, pastor of St. Elizabeth of the Trinity Parish in North Haven, discontinued meetings in person because of the coronavirus. But that did not stop the group from communicating by holding meetings through Zoom, a web-based video conferencing tool that allows people to stay connected.

Also in this issue, we update the story we first brought you in January about two Connecticut doctors beginning a medical mission in West Africa. Read their story of survival and how important all of your prayers meant to them. **CT**

## Archdiocesan Priest to be Beatified

Looking ahead to September, we will go into depth about the life of Father Michael McGivney, an Archdiocese of Hartford priest who died at age 38 of pneumonia in 1890, coincidentally during a pandemic similar to the current coronavirus outbreak.

Father McGivney is moving a step closer to possible sainthood after Pope Francis in late May approved a miracle attributed to the intercession of him. He would be the first United States parish priest to be beatified, and we are blessed he is one of our own. We are happy to be able to trace his roots around the archdiocese.

Until then, stay safe, stay healthy and enjoy the summer.



PORTRAIT BY JOHN TIERNY



# Blessed Mary

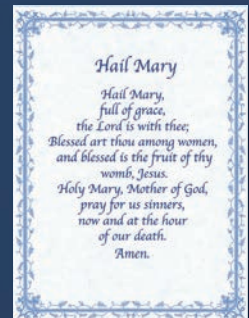
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Archbishop Leonard P. Blair offered remarks of gratitude and prayer to nurses and front-line caregivers outside of St. Francis Hospital in Hartford on National Nurses Day in May.



**ARCHBISHOP LEONARD P. BLAIR** is the 13th bishop of the Archdiocese of Hartford.

PHOTO BY DAVID ELLIOTT

# IN ALL THINGS, CHARITY

Once again I find myself writing early on, in preparation for the July-August edition of the *Catholic Transcript*. And yes, as I write, the pandemic is still with us, though hopefully mitigated in some significant way by the time you read this.

Some months ago, I told the priests of the archdiocese that when all is said and done after this great health crisis, the most important thing that will be remembered is charity, our love of neighbor. We see this charity expressed in many ways. It is to be found in heroic health care workers and all who support, encourage and thank them; in the material and spiritual help and comfort extended to those who are suffering materially or spiritually; in people's willingness to set aside their usual patterns of behavior for the sake of the common good. There has been a great outpouring of goodness on the part of many in the face of a common threat to the lives and health of us all.

As closed down as the archdiocese and parishes have been for an extended period, innovation and ingenuity have not been lacking to reach out to parishioners and to the general public. Many of our Catholic parishes and entities have found creative ways to engage not only parishioners but the public at large by witnessing to the Gospel and exercising the virtue of charity.

Not all forms of charity are financial, to be sure. But in that area, too, I have been very encouraged and gratified by the contributions that have continued to come in by mail or online to the 2020 Archbishop's Annual Appeal (AAA). As I write this, we have fallen behind where we were at this time last year, but under the circumstances I prefer to think of the glass as half-full rather than half-empty, given all the challenges that people are facing, including many with financial fears of their own.

The fact that people are continuing to be generous to the Appeal has made it possible for the archdiocese not to back away, but to increase its support of local charities that are struggling to meet the needs created by the pandemic. I say "archdiocese," but what that really means is the Catholic people who contribute annually to the AAA. Thanks to your generosity, \$1,058,500 was distributed in 2019 to 226 community organizations serving the needs of the people in Litchfield, New Haven and Hartford counties. These entities were nominated by local pastors, since they are the most knowledgeable about

local needs and effective local outreach.

The coronavirus has created an emergency situation for many of those charitable community organizations and I believe we need to help as much as we can. So, in order to meet the emergency needs of people who find themselves lacking the basic necessities, additional grants were made in May to 91 community-based organizations that had already received a grant from the Archbishop's Annual Appeal last fall. These 91 groups provide direct assistance through soup kitchens, food pantries, food banks and shelters. These additional grants total \$322,000.

*Charity begins at home.* And many adults and children live within *our home*, that is, within the communities that comprise the Archdiocese of Hartford. Because of your support of the Appeal, you have eased the burdens of many families and individuals afflicted by the pandemic. I want to express my personal gratitude and, if I may, the gratitude of those helped by your prayers, sacrificial giving and reliable support of the Archbishop's Annual Appeal. In circumstances such as these, the Catholic community of faith will want to be remembered for assisting an array of people who did not choose to be lacking employment, housing, food or health.

Let us continue to support and pray for one another, especially those most in need. God bless you. ☪



# EN TODAS LAS COSAS, CARIDAD

Una vez más, me encuentro escribiendo temprano, en preparación para la edición de julio-agosto de *Catholic Transcript*. Y aunque, mientras escribo, la pandemia todavía está con nosotros, esperamos que se mitigue de alguna manera significativa para cuando lean esto.



**EL ARZOBISPO LEONARD P. BLAIR**  
es el 13er obispo de la Arquidiócesis de Hartford.

Hace unos meses, les dije a los sacerdotes de la arquidiócesis que cuando todo este dicho y hecho después de esta gran crisis sanitaria, lo más importante que se recordará es la caridad, nuestro amor al prójimo. Vemos esta caridad expresada de muchas maneras. Se encuentra en heroicos trabajadores de la salud y en todos los que los apoyan, alientan y agradecen; en la ayuda y consuelo material y espiritual extendido a aquellos que sufren material o espiritualmente; en la disposición de las personas a dejar de lado sus patrones de comportamiento habituales por el bien común. Ha habido una gran efusión de bondad por parte de muchos frente a una amenaza común para la vida y la salud de todos nosotros.

Y aunque la arquidiócesis y las parroquias han estado cerradas durante un período prolongado, no nos ha faltado innovación e ingenio para llegar a los feligreses y al público en general. Muchas de nuestras parroquias y entidades católicas han encontrado formas creativas de involucrar no solo a los feligreses, sino también al público en general, dando testimonio del Evangelio y ejerciendo la virtud de la caridad.

No todas las formas de caridad son financieras, sin duda. Pero también en esa área, me han animado y gratificado las contribuciones que han seguido llegando por correo o en línea a la Campaña Anual del Arzobispo de 2020 (AAA, por la sigla en inglés). Mientras escribo esto, estamos atrasados en comparación a donde nos encontramos en esta misma época el año pasado, pero dadas las circunstancias, prefiero pensar en el vaso medio lleno en lugar de medio vacío, dados todos los desafíos que enfrentan las personas, incluyendo muchos con temores financieros propios.

El hecho de que la gente continúe siendo generosa con la Campaña ha hecho posible que la arquidiócesis no retroceda, sino que aumente su apoyo a organizaciones benéficas locales que luchan por satisfacer las necesidades creadas por la pandemia. Digo "arquidiócesis", pero lo que eso realmente significa es el pueblo católico que contribuye anualmente a la AAA. Gracias a su generosidad, se distribuyeron \$1,058,500 en 2019 a 226 organizaciones comunitarias que satisfacen las necesidades de las personas en los condados de Litchfield, New Haven y Hartford. Estas entidades fueron nominadas por pastores locales, ya que son los que mejor conocen las

necesidades y su alcance locales efectivo.

El coronavirus ha creado una situación de emergencia para muchas de esas organizaciones comunitarias de caridad y creo que necesitamos ayudar tanto como podamos. Por lo tanto, para satisfacer las necesidades de emergencia de las personas que carecen de las necesidades básicas, se otorgaron subvenciones adicionales en mayo a 91 organizaciones comunitarias que ya habían recibido una subvención de la Campaña Anual del Arzobispo el otoño pasado. Estos 91 grupos brindan asistencia directa a través de comedores populares, despensas de alimentos, bancos de comida y refugios. Estas subvenciones adicionales suman un total de \$322,000.

*La caridad comienza en casa.* Y muchos adultos y niños viven dentro de *nuestro hogar*, es decir, dentro de las comunidades que comprenden la Arquidiócesis de Hartford. Gracias a su apoyo a la Campaña, han aliviado las cargas de muchas familias e individuos afectados por la pandemia. Quiero expresar mi gratitud personal y, si puedo, la gratitud de aquellos ayudados por sus oraciones, sacrificios y apoyo fiel a la Campaña Anual del Arzobispo. En circunstancias como estas, la comunidad católica de fe querrá ser recordada por ayudar a un conjunto de personas que no eligieron carecer de empleo, vivienda, comida o salud.

Sigamos apoyándonos mutuamente y orando unos por otros, especialmente por los más necesitados. Dios les bendiga. 🙏



El arzobispo Leonard P. Blair preside una liturgia para volver a consagrar la Arquidiócesis de Hartford, simultáneamente con la liturgia precedida por el arzobispo Gómez en Los Ángeles.





# MASSES RESUME

PHOTO BY AARON JOSEPH

PHOTO BY AARON JOSEPH

*Reconnecting with God as we are welcomed back to Church.*



PHOTO BY KAREN AVITABILE



PHOTO BY KAREN AVITABILE



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Story by **KAREN A. AVITABILE**

**S**ome traditions may look different now at Mass — wearing masks, sitting six feet apart in the pews, not shaking hands during public worship and entering and exiting in different areas. But the message from God has not changed.

“We bring the same message of God’s hope, God’s goodness, God’s humble message to the world, God’s love to the world, but now in a new way, maybe with a mask on, maybe at six feet away from somebody else, not shaking someone’s hand, not hugging somebody, but still being a messenger of hope in the midst of a coronavirus, in the midst of racism,” Monsignor Joseph DiSciaccia, pastor of Divine Mercy Parish, told a congregation of 43 people at St. Rita Church, Hamden, when daily Mass resumed on June 8.

“Being a person, a message of hope, that’s what Jesus was, that’s what Jesus is today and that is what Jesus will always be, one who brings love, one who brings hope, one who brings peace and, because we are the Divine Mercy Parish, one who brings mercy,” he added.

While the archdiocese has begun the reopening of churches for public worship and the celebration of sacraments, priests were excited (and a little nervous) to welcome back parishioners for the first time since churches closed in mid-March due to COVID-19.

“It’s like the first day of school,” Monsignor Joseph T. Donnelly, pastor of Sacred Heart Parish in Southbury, said before parishioners arrived. “Everything is brand new and polished.”

At the start of Mass, Monsignor Donnelly reiterated his exuberance to the congregation. “How good it is for us to be here,” he said. “How good it is for us as people of faith to come together in this place that is so sacred and important to all of us

and to do what characterizes us as followers of Jesus in a very particular way ... We begin this liturgy grateful to be together yet aware of the great tasks that lie before us in not only the reopening of the church but the healing of our nation.”

Father Alexander Avendano, pastor of Maria Reina de la Paz Parish in Hartford, urged parishioners attending Mass at St. Lawrence O’Toole Church to take the new regulations seriously because COVID-19 is not gone yet; people have been sickened and many people, including some from the parish, have died from it.

“Our God Jesus, our beloved savior is working and helping us,” he said. “Let us pray to God, let us pray to Jesus our hope will be strengthened day and night. ... We have not been abandoned by God. ... God has always been on our side.”

Those attending daily Mass on the opening day said the new guidelines did not deter them from coming. On the contrary. They said they were eager to get back.

“I got my ticket to paradise,” Rick O’Doy said after Mass at Sacred Heart Parish. “I feel real anchored.”

Gail Bellucci of Divine Mercy Parish was a greeter at the door and provided hand sanitizer to people walking in. “I’m thrilled,” she said of returning to Mass. “We need to start somewhere, and I’m happy the archbishop decided to do this in a methodical way.”

A member of Maria Reina de la Paz Parish for about eight years, Yanet Pichen called reopening the Church “wonderful.” “We missed coming to our Church,” she said. **ti**



PHOTO BY KAREN AVITABILE



PHOTO BY KAREN AVITABILE



PHOTO BY AARON JOSEPH



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PHOTO BY KAREN AVITABILE



PHOTO BY AARON JOSEPH



**TO SEE A VIDEO** about guidelines for returning to Mass, visit [archdioceseofhartford.org](https://www.archdioceseofhartford.org).

Archbishop Leonard P. Blair has dispensed every Catholic in the archdiocese from the obligation of attending Sunday Mass through Sept. 6.





# Staying Hopeful, Staying Prayerful at Home

*God's love is at work, even during uncertain times.*

Story by **KAREN A. AVITABILE**

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** During this unprecedented time of isolation, social distancing, fear and uncertainty, staying close or growing closer to God has never been more important. In the absence of a community of faith, prayer has taken on a new meaning at home.

The experience has been a defining moment for the Church and for all of us individually. It has given everyone the opportunity to take a pause from our busy routines and spend time strengthening our personal journey with God.

Although churches are beginning to open again, some parishioners will not be able to partake in the communal liturgies as the threat of COVID-19 lingers. Thus, prayer will continue at home and individually, in solidarity and connectedness.

We bring four different stories of individuals and families who are spending quality time with the Lord and the joy it has brought them. The coronavirus pandemic has reaffirmed that we can call on God anytime we want. Continue to take those extra moments to pray at home, even after your routine gets back to normal.



The Bradley family prays together while watching mass.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BRADLEY FAMILY  
ICON: FOMIKUM/GETTY IMAGES

For Tricia Lougal, the coronavirus came at the perfect time for slowing down, strengthening her family's connection with God and defining what it truly means to be a Catholic.

"It was eye-opening for me," she says. "We were in 'go' mode. I'd like to continue this, commit to less and do more."

Lougal, her husband, Scott, and their three children, Parker, Fischer and Mason, have eased into a new routine at home since the coronavirus began. The family set up a quiet prayer space in their living room with crosses and rosary beads. On Sundays, they watch Mass together in front of the television. Daily family walks focus on the good things that come from God. And Bible study continues to take place at home instead of at their parish, St. John Bosco Parish, which is made up of St. Mary Church and St. Therese Church in Branford.

"They sit together and read Bible stories and then we talk about it," Lougal says.

In the past, the family always talked about slowing down but did not do so until COVID-19 forced them to. Now, they feel blessed to have had this opportunity.

"Being a Catholic now is a time to be more thankful, a time to slow down and appreciate the little things and start doing things for other people," Lougal says. The family recently helped a woman clean her yard. "This is a way to stop, slow down and start spending time with your family. It's a more peaceful time for me."



***"I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below — indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord."***

— Rom 8:38-39

**REMAIN UNITED IN PRAYER**

Lorraine Greski, a member of Church of the Assumption in Ansonia, says she believes our faith is being tested during the coronavirus. Yet, she adds, this is also an opportunity for grace.

"Try not to get discouraged," she says. "If you believe God is granting you the graces you receive when you get Communion, then I've been blessed."

While Greski misses receiving Communion, she prays a spiritual communion every day. "I miss the physical host, but I believe God is there granting you the graces that you need and you may ask for," she adds. "God will fill our hearts with grace, any time."

Since the cancellation of Masses and liturgies in the churches, Greski has been watching EWTN (The Eternal Word Television Network) and the daily Mass, and has been praying the Rosary a couple of times a day — at home and in her church. A proponent of reciting the Rosary, Greski, an organizer of the annual Rosary Rally in October at The Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Waterbury, also belongs to the Traveling Rosary Congress in the archdiocese.



PHOTO BY AARON JOSEPH

"I try to get in a few rosaries a day," she says. "I'm trying harder now. I think the Rosary is the most important prayer of all of them."

During a time of social distancing, Greski says it is important to remain united in prayer while trying to "keep the presence of God as much as you can."

**EVERY DAY IS A 'GIFT'**

KellyAnn Carpentier was raised Catholic but left the faith after making her confirmation. In 2016, after her mom's dying wish that she return to the faith — which she promised she would do — she purchased a Bible and began watching EWTN. The following year, she returned to church, St. Mary Parish in New Haven, on Ash Wednesday.

"It was amazing, it was emotionally overwhelming," she says, adding she felt very welcomed.

Today, Carpentier is a devoted Third Order Dominican. She has been watching daily Mass on Facebook and says she believes the pandemic has brought her closer to God. Her Marian devotions are stronger than ever and she has experienced

an "enhanced fervor in her prayers," she adds.

"This pandemic has brought a sense of consolation when you pray that I have never experienced before," Carpentier says. "It's bringing the necessity of prayer out like never before."

Catholics need to be mindful that every day is a gift and it is not guaranteed, she says, adding, "Our strength comes from God. Everything we do and say should be a step toward giving our life back to God, especially now more than ever."



PHOTO BY AARON JOSEPH



PHOTO BY AARON JOSEPH



**“THE STATUE WAS A CONCRETE WAY FOR OUR KIDS TO ‘SEE’ JESUS AT MASS EVERY WEEK WHEN THEY WERE LITTLE. WE WOULD TELL THEM JESUS IS IN CHURCH, BUT IT’S ALL VERY ABSTRACT FOR YOUNG KIDS, SO IT BECAME A RITUAL FOR US TO STOP AT THE STATUE EVERY WEEK AFTER MASS ENDED.”** — Sarah Bradley



The Bradley family visits St. Mary Church regularly to pray at the statue of the Good Shepherd.

PHOTO BY AARON JOSEPH


### PRAYING TOGETHER

Since the coronavirus, the Bradley family has been watching Mass livestreamed from St. John Bosco Parish. “We talk about the Mass afterward,” Sarah Bradley says. “They stand up, they kneel, we sing the songs. We are still participating.”

A television stand with statues, crosses and candles has become a makeshift church in the Bradley home, in addition to a prayer area in the master bedroom that has been set up for years.

The pandemic has “reoriented” the family to praying more together, Bradley says. Three times a day, her husband, Eric, walks their three boys — Jacob, Theodore and Samuel — through the Angelus prayer, in addition to reciting the Hail Mary and Hail Holy Queen. The family also continues to visit the statue of the Good Shepherd outside St. Mary Church.

“The statue was a concrete way for our kids to ‘see’ Jesus at Mass every week when they were little,” Bradley says. “We would tell them Jesus is in church, but it’s all very abstract for young kids, so it became a ritual for us to stop at the statue every week after Mass ended. We would tell the kids to say ‘hi’ to Jesus and they would always go right up to the statue, touch and hug it, and sometimes say a prayer.”

Although Bradley home-schools her children and is with them all day, she says she hopes they continue praying together after the pandemic is over. “I think this has been hugely eye-opening,” she says, “and I have a higher appreciation for our family and our faith.” 

## An Act of Spiritual Communion

*My Jesus,  
I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.  
I love you above all things, and I desire to receive you into my soul.  
Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually  
into my heart.  
I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you.  
Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.*

ICON: FONIKUM/GETTY IMAGES





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# Console Yourself with God During Dark Times



**AUXILIARY BISHOP JUAN MIGUEL BETANCOURT** is the ninth auxiliary bishop for the Archdiocese of Hartford.

KZENON/GETTY IMAGES

**F**or the past few months now, there has not been a day that we have not talked about the effects of the pandemic, and rightly so. In Connecticut, both Church and the government have taken responsible and essential measures to restrain the spread of the pandemic. However, our experience of life has changed drastically in such a short time, with very little available to our control.

For many of us, going through all sorts of challenges, our hope of a prompt re-establishment of normal life slowly has changed to far more worries and apprehensions. Our fear can grow from frustration and anger into anxiety and depression. Even when anxiety indicates a normal human response to take protective measures in the face of danger, extended stressful times are unsuitable to our overall health.

While many of us have read many articles and heard interviews on coping with negative feelings during these unprecedented times, returning to God and his word are an unreplaceable means to keep up our languishing hope. Moreover, our relationship with our savior and consoler should always be our first call every time we feel an overwhelming sense of uncertainty and helplessness. Here are some texts that I find helpful when we need to be reminded of God's constant care for us amid a dark time.

■ **2 Corinthians 1:3-4** — Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God.

■ **Deuteronomy 31:8** — It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.

■ **Psalms 40:1-3** — I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.

■ **Psalms 46:1** — God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

■ **Psalms 94:19** — When the cares of my heart are many, your consolations cheer my soul.

■ **Philippians 4:6-7** — Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Let us keep our trust in the Lord and pray for one another as we serve our God and our neighbor in his love and hope. ☪

Auxiliary Bishop Juan Miguel Betancourt works at his office in the Pastoral Center, Bloomfield.



PHOTO BY AARON JOSEPH



# Consuélese con Dios durante los tiempos oscuros



**EL OBISPO AUXILIAR JUAN MIGUEL BETANCOURT** es el noveno obispo auxiliar de la Arquidiócesis de Hartford.

**D**urante los últimos meses, prácticamente no ha habido un día en que no hayamos hablado con alguien sobre los efectos de la pandemia, y con razón. En Connecticut, tanto la Iglesia como el gobierno han tomado medidas responsables y esenciales para frenar la propagación de la pandemia. Sin embargo, nuestro modo de vida ha cambiado drásticamente en tan poco tiempo, que tenemos muy poco disponible a nuestro control.

**“NUESTRA RELACIÓN CON NUESTRO SALVADOR Y CONSOLADOR SIEMPRE DEBE SER NUESTRO PRIMER PUNTO DE REFERENCIA CADA VEZ QUE SENTIMOS UNA SENSACIÓN ABRUMADORA DE INCERTIDUMBRE E IMPOTENCIA”.**

— Obispo auxiliar, Juan Miguel Betancourt

Para muchos de nosotros, que estamos pasando por todo tipo de desafíos, nuestra esperanza de un restablecimiento rápido a la vida normal ha cambiado gradualmente hacia muchas más preocupaciones y temores. Nuestros temores pueden pasar de la frustración y la ira a la ansiedad y la depresión. Incluso aun cuando la ansiedad es una respuesta humana normal para tomar medidas de protección ante el peligro, los tiempos estresantes prolongados son inconvenientes para nuestra salud en general.

Si bien muchos de nosotros hemos leído muchos artículos y escuchado entrevistas sobre cómo enfrentar los sentimientos negativos durante estos tiempos sin precedentes, un medio irremplazable para mantener nuestra esperanza debilitada es regresar a Dios y a su Palabra. Además, nuestra relación con nuestro salvador y consolador siempre debe ser nuestro primer punto de referencia cada vez que sentimos una sensación abrumadora de incertidumbre e impotencia. Aquí les sugiero algunos textos que encuentro útiles cuando necesitamos recordar el cuidado constante de Dios por nosotros en medio de un tiempo oscuro.

■ **2 Corintios 1:3-4** — ¡Bendito sea Dios y Padre de nuestro Señor Jesucristo, Padre misericordioso y Dios de todo consuelo. ¡Él es el que nos conforta en todos nuestros sufrimientos, para que gracias al consuelo que recibimos de Dios, podamos nosotros confortar a todos los que sufren!

■ **Deuteronomio 31:8** — El Señor te guiará y estará contigo, no te dejará ni te abandonará; no temas ni te acobardes.

■ **Salmos 40:1-3** — Puse toda mi esperanza en el Señor; él se inclinó hacia mí y escuchó mi grito. Me sacó del hoyo mortal, de la charca fangosa; afianzó mis pies sobre la roca, dio firmeza a mis pasos. Puso en mi boca un canto nuevo, un himno a nuestro Dios.

■ **Salmos 46:1** — Dios es nuestro refugio y fortaleza, nuestro auxilio oportuno en el peligro.

■ **Salmos 94:19** — Aunque tenga mil preocupaciones, tus consuelos me alegran.

■ **Filipenses 4:6-7** — Que nada los angustie; al contrario, en cualquier situación presenten sus deseos a Dios orando, suplicando y dando gracias. Y la paz de Dios, que supera cualquier razonamiento, protegerá sus corazones y sus pensamientos por medio de Cristo Jesús.

Mantengamos nuestra confianza en el Señor y oremos unos por otros mientras servimos a nuestro Dios y a nuestro prójimo con su amor y su esperanza. 🙏



El obispo auxiliar Juan Miguel Betancourt está trabajando desde su oficina en el Centro Pastoral de Bloomfield.





Emily and Christopher Wakefield oversee God, Baby & Me at St. Elizabeth of the Trinity Parish. They are pictured with their son, Declan. Their daughter, Mary, was born on May 4.



# Sharing God's Love with Children

PHOTO BY AARON JOSEPH

## God, Baby & Me welcomes young families into the church.

Story by **KAREN A. AVITABILE**

*"But Jesus said, 'Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.'" — Mt 19:14*

Father Michael Santiago understands that a crying child during Mass may be distracting to some people. Nevertheless, he calls it "wonderful."



Father Michael Santiago.

"I say, 'isn't that wonderful,'" Father Santiago, pastor of St. Elizabeth of the Trinity Parish in North Haven, says, when parishioners

complain about crying children who may be interrupting a sermon or the liturgy of the Eucharist.

"It may be distracting to some," he says, "but for me it is an inspiration for the future."

Because inclusion spiritually in the Church family needs to begin at a young age, Father Santiago encourages parents to bring their children to Mass. "It all starts when you are little," he says. "The children are the future of the Church."

His sentiment is echoed by Emily Wakefield and her husband, Christopher, the parents of a toddler and a newborn,

who spearhead God, Baby & Me, a ministry formed by Father Santiago in spring 2019. The group strives to involve young families in the parish, which is made up of St. Barnabas, St. Frances Cabrini and St. Therese churches.

"Father Santiago wants to hear the children crying at church," says Wakefield, who sits with other young families in the pews. "I try to stay out of those (crying) rooms because I like my child to be in the congregation."

To promote God, Baby & Me, the Wakefields meet all first-time parents who are baptizing their child at the parish during



## “AS PARENTS, WE WANTED TO FIND A WAY THAT OUR YOUNG CHILDREN COULD CONTINUE TO DEVELOP A LOVE AND CONNECTION WITH GOD AND THE CHURCH THAT WOULD PROMOTE SPIRITUAL AND PERSONAL GROWTH.”

– MELISSA MAZZARO

their pre-baptism class and invite them to come to the ministry. “We welcome them in the parish and share Father Santiago’s message to invite young children to church,” she says. “This message doesn’t get communicated often: come to us, get engaged, you are always welcome.”

The group meets once a month after the 11 a.m. Mass in the parish hall of St. Therese. Discussions may include a theme related to the Gospel or faith formation, in addition to topics affecting young families such as how to balance work-life issues. During the shutdown of churches during COVID-19, God, Baby & Me meetings were held online through Zoom.

“We talk about the theme and anything else that comes up,” Wakefield says, adding that parents also seek guidance and support from one another. “We are trying to encourage the faith formation but also keep it open to the needs of the parent.”

Being engaged in Church life and Mass

has always been an important part of Wakefield’s life. God, Baby and Me, she says, has helped her grow closer to God.

### SHARING CATHOLIC FAITH

For member Kate Hubbard, God, Baby & Me provides an opportunity to “re-center and look at the highs and lows of raising our kids through a Catholic lens.”

In addition, the group has allowed Hubbard and her husband, Michael, to meet other young parents and for their kids — they have two daughters and a son — to meet other children in the parish.

“I am enjoying growing friendships with families who share our Catholic faith and are at the same busy point in their lives,” she says. “Being part of the group has helped me to feel more connected to my faith as well as to our parish community.”

Melissa Mazzaro and her husband, Adam, were looking to connect with the Church on more of a “whole family level,” she says. They have one daughter and one son.

“As parents, we wanted to find a way that our young children could continue to develop a love and connection with God and the Church that would promote spiritual and personal growth,” Mazzaro says.

God Baby & Me has allowed the Mazzaros and their children to participate within the Church in a way that is “appealing and meaningful” to them, she says, “which we feel will help encourage them to build their love for God as they grow.”

She adds, “This group has not only helped us as parents to guide our children in strengthening their relationship with God, but has encouraged us to further strengthen our own relationships with him as well. This ultimately has created a deeper sense of faith for us individually, as a married couple and for us as a family.”



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY THE MAZZARO FAMILY

The Mazzaros, Melissa, Adam, their daughter, Milana, 3, and son, Angelo, 1.

### A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

God, Baby & Me has also been instrumental in helping young families develop friendships with one another. “I can meet young families,” Wakefield says, “and develop a sense of community.”

While Hubbard was involved in young adult groups in the past, she says her needs changed when she started a family.

“While we attend Mass regularly and see a few young families like ours at church each week, it’s difficult to strike up a conversation, let alone form relationships with other parents before or after Mass as our children are pulling us in every direction,” she says. “I was excited about the opportunity that God, Baby & Me ministry offered to meet other young parents and for our kids to meet other children in our parish.”

Adds Mazzaro, “Additionally, it is a place where parents can feel comfortable finding support and brainstorm ideas relative to the Church and our families.”

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**  
about the God, Baby & Me  
ministry, email Emily Wakefield  
at [emilyowakefield@gmail.com](mailto:emilyowakefield@gmail.com).



PHOTO BY AARON JOSEPH

Kate and Michael Hubbard and their children, Annie, 4, Grace, 2, and James who was born in February, belong to God, Baby & Me.



FOCUSED ON

# Faith Formation, Evangelization and Catholic Leadership

*In its 25th year, Catholic Biblical School introduces the Bible to students.*

KRISANAPONG DETRAPHPHAT/GETTY IMAGES

Story by **JOE PISANI** | Photos by **AARON JOSEPH**

**C**lara Mahilia Roache wanted to rediscover her faith. A lifelong Catholic from St. Lucia in the Caribbean, she was committed to becoming a more mature Christian and gaining a fuller understanding of the Bible. So she enrolled in the Archdiocese of Hartford Catholic Biblical School.

Learning has always been part of her life. She has degrees in international studies and international trade policy and planned to return to St. Lucia and use her knowledge to help her country. But then, something happened.

When Roache entered the Catholic Biblical School offered through the Archdiocese of Hartford, she was working at Bank of America. When she completed the program, she became Sister Clara Mahilia Roache of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. As she looks back on those years, everything seems clearer now.

“What I thought were disappointments and challenges that could have crushed me I see differently after opening up to

that little yearning to know more about my faith,” she says. “I was born and raised a Catholic, but my faith was always associated with my family. I really had to find a way to make it my own, and the Biblical School helped me do that by becoming a more mature adult Christian and discerning the religious life.”

At the Catholic Biblical School, she met other students with a desire to deepen their faith and understand the word of God, and among her classmates were four postulants from the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

In the process of rediscovering her faith and discovering the Bible, Roache discovered a vocation to the religious life.



PHOTO BY AARON JOSEPH

**Sister Clara Mahilia Roache.**

Today, Sister Clara Mahilia Roache, class of 2014, teaches fourth grade at Santa Maria School in the Bronx.

“I remember asking the Lord to help me deepen my faith,” she recalls. “My four years in the school gave me a chance to dig deeper into the Bible, starting with the Old Testament. I also got to talk to other people and learn about their faith journey.”



Barbara Jean Daly Horell, director of the Catholic Biblical School.

## *Catholic Biblical School to Launch Hybrid Model*

Due to COVID-19, the spring semester of the Catholic Biblical School which ended in May went to online learning. Students entering the school for the first time in the upcoming session that begins in September and runs through May 2021 have the option to study in a learning model that combines in-person small group discussions with remote instructor interaction for convenience and safety. This will ensure students remain safe amid coronavirus restrictions.

This model will reduce in-person contact by limiting weekly gatherings to about five students. It will also limit the travel time to sites, where instructors will gather with students who choose to attend in person, and use GoToMeeting to connect with other students.

“We had to train some of our teachers and then do dry runs to help them become comfortable teaching online,” says Barbara Jean Daly Horell, director of the Catholic Biblical School. “And we also provided instruction to students. Even the most technologically inexpert students have been able to phone in. For people who had the capacity to attend through a computer link, they could see and hear the instructor, they could converse together and they could see the teacher’s screen and all the visual prompts. It was very much like being right in the classroom.”

**“ALL OF OUR GRADUATES HAVE AN INSPIRING STORY TO TELL, AND WHEN THEY COME TOGETHER AND TELL THEIR STORIES, IT IS A POWERFUL, POWERFUL EXPERIENCE. PEOPLE SAY THE BIBLICAL SCHOOL CHANGED THEM, AND I AM SPEECHLESS WHEN I SEE THE WAY GOD IS WORKING IN THEIR LIVES.”**

— Barbara Jean Daly Horell, director of the Catholic Biblical School

### **FOCUSED ON FAITH FORMATION FOR 25 YEARS**

For the past 25 years, the Catholic Biblical School, a higher education four-year program focused on adult faith formation, evangelization and Catholic leadership, has seen more than 1,000 graduates.

“It introduces students to biblical content, and more importantly it gives them the tools to engage the Bible by entering the text as it would have been understood in its original time, historically and culturally and finding God there from our own perspective,” says Barbara Jean Daly Horell, director of the Catholic Biblical School since 2008. “When people gather to study together, the most inspiring encounters with the word of God can happen. This is a great time for people to pick up their Bibles, dust them off and read them.”

But, she adds, a lot of people give up quickly. “It’s not like picking up a novel in the supermarket or browsing on the web,” Horell says. “It requires guidance, and that is why the Church values the work of biblical scholars, educators and pastors to help people dig into the Bible in a way that can transform them and give them a deeper relationship with Jesus.”

### **‘A DIFFERENT WAY TO LOOK AT THE BIBLE’**

Angela Arpino, class of 2005, had a career in publishing and journalism. Her only real contact with the word of God was in the Sunday readings at Mass.

After enrolling in the Catholic Biblical School, she began to look at the Bible in an entirely different way. Once she



Angela Arpino.

completed her studies, she went on to get a certificate in faith formation from Fordham University and became a parish catechetical leader who designed a Vacation Bible Study program. Today, she is a member of the Catholic Biblical School’s extension faculty and teaches a six-week introductory course.

“I grew up at St. Gabriel’s in Milford and have always been a lector and read the Word at Mass,” she said, “But things really changed for me after I made a Cursillo, and they gave me a Good News Bible that had a glossary in the back with passages to read for different occasions.”

Shortly afterward, she saw a blurb in the parish bulletin and enrolled in the Catholic Biblical School. The next four years of study dispelled her preconceptions about the Bible.

“I love astronomy, and one reason I didn’t look at the Bible sooner was because Genesis was a big stumbling block





PHOTO BY AARON JOSEPH

Lourdes Rodriguez graduates from the Catholic Biblical School and receives congratulations from Auxiliary Bishop Juan Miguel Betancourt and a certificate from Barbara Jean Daly Horell, director of the Catholic Biblical School. The ceremony took place last year.

## Holy Land Trip Planned

As part of its 25th anniversary celebration, the school launched a Biblical Literacy Project, directed toward adult parishioners and Catholic schoolteachers. In addition, a 12-day pilgrimage to the Holy Land is set for January 2022 with Archbishop Leonard P. Blair and Auxiliary Bishop Juan Miguel Betancourt, visiting holy sites such as Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jerusalem and the Sea of Galilee.

for me,” she says. “It was hard for me to accept the concept that everything was created in seven days, but we learned the creation stories are not to be taken literally but were meant to teach us important spiritual truths.”

After graduating, she was asked to teach an adult Bible study class at Our Lady of Victory Parish in West Haven. In addition, she became director of religious education there.

“I never felt so called to a job,” Arpino recalls. “Working for the Church in that capacity for nine years was everything I loved to do.”

She recently had been teaching an introductory course at Our Lady of the Assumption in Woodbridge, but it was postponed until the fall because of the coronavirus crisis. The students, who range in age from their 20s to 70s, take one evening a week to learn more about their faith by studying and praying with the Bible and gaining an understanding of the cultural context in which each book was written. The course, which is available to parishes, explores major biblical themes and provides an overview of the theological and scholarly approaches to the Bible.

“I love teaching the course, and the curriculum is awesome,” Arpino says. “Students are given a different way to look at the Bible, and they’re amazed by what they don’t know.”

## ‘THE GREATEST LOVE STORY OF ALL TIME’

Ken Foisie, class of 2010, has had a long career in finance, from trust officer to investment counselor and securities analyst. Today, he manages retirement portfolios, advises seniors, teaches adult Bible study and also leads pilgrimages to the Holy Land with his wife, Jean.

“Four years at the Catholic Biblical School changes your life because it changes your perspective and your priorities,” Foisie says. “You take hard times, times like now, and you realize there’s a lot more. If your priorities are lined up properly, life becomes easier, and your thinking is much more compatible with your spirituality.”

A history buff, Foisie says he knew a lot about United States and world history, but virtually nothing about the history of his faith.

“Between the Old Testament and the Gospels, there’s about 4,000 years of history with strange names and places,” he says. “I entered the school because of spiritual motives and my love of history. Once you get into biblical studies, it grabs you like quicksand, and you go deeper and deeper. The more you learn, the more you want to learn and the more you realize you don’t know.”

He began teaching Bible study five years ago at Our Lady of Hope Parish



Ken Foisie.

in New Hartford and offers classes at Trinita Retreat Center in New Hartford and several parishes. Many students take his course because they’re looking for a deeper relationship with God.

“So many people don’t have a biblical background, and this is really one of the most important decisions they can make in life, to get to know their creator,” Foisie says. “It’s a love story. People are always paying money to go to the movies and to buy books because they want a story. But this is the greatest love story of all time, the story of salvation.” ❧



# A Time to Slow Down

*Stillness is essential for vocational discernment.*



**FATHER MICHAEL CASEY**  
is the director of vocations for the Archdiocese of Hartford.

**F**or many of us, the time of coronavirus pandemic brought with it great changes in our daily lives. We each probably had our daily schedule that was more or less busy. Then, between early to mid-March, all of that came to a grinding halt. Our social lives pretty much stopped. Many people found themselves at home for many, many more hours than they would have ever imagined, and all of a sudden a day spent on the couch watching Netflix lost its novel allure.

Even in the midst of this there were those who became busier: our government leaders, health care workers and other essential employees. But even they found that the normal ways to unwind after long days of work had drastically changed.

Now, it is summer, which is a time traditionally devoted to slowing down. Slowing down should be ordered for rejuvenation, and in this regard it is different from idleness. Idleness is doing nothing. Not many people feel good after binge watching a new TV show all day.

True rest and leisure, on the other hand, is about using our free time for spiritual renewal. This happens most importantly through prayer. It also happens through time with family and friends, time spent in nature and time spent reading. When we engage in these activities, we are far from idle; however, we are also not frenetically busy. Rather, we are being slowly rebuilt, from the inside. Days and seasons of rest can be great ways to catch up on the spiritual growth that may be lacking in our everyday life.

Slowing down, when embraced rather than rejected, allows

us to refocus on what is important. It is a part of our spiritual heritage, from our Jewish ancestors, that there be a weekly enforced rest known as the Sabbath. It was (and still should be) a time to unplug from the other daily concerns of life and remember that the Lord is God, who gave us an example of resting on the seventh day. A regular, intentional slowing down allows us to reassess what is important to us and clear away many of the distractions in our lives.



*“Be still and know that I am God.”* (Ps 46:11)

Stillness is essential for any form of vocational discernment. When we are so caught up in daily activities and even distractions, we don't have the freedom to hear the voice of God. In the Book of Kings, God spoke to Elijah in a gentle whisper. If we can't hear God speaking in our lives, maybe it is because we

are moving too fast or keeping the noises around us too loud. This summer, and for as long as the coronavirus pandemic lifestyle lasts, we should each be sure we are embracing the slowing down of life, and the opportunity it presents to hear anew the voice of God. ☪

**ARE YOU DISCERNING A CALL TO THE PRIESTHOOD, RELIGIOUS LIFE OR THE DIACONATE?** If you think God may be calling you, do not be afraid. Visit [archdioceseofhartford.org/vocations](http://archdioceseofhartford.org/vocations) or contact the Office of Vocations, 860.761.7456, to learn more.



# Leading with Hope and Faith

*Catholic Charities carries on its mission of spreading God's love during unsettling times.*

By JACK SHEEDY

**C**atholic Charities has been extending the love of Jesus by reaching out to more people than normal during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"If you look at our mission, our mission does say, 'reflecting God's love, we partner with all to strengthen families,' and responding to the needs of families is reflecting God's love," says Liz Bryden, the new chief operations officer of Catholic Charities for the Archdiocese of Hartford.

The coronavirus crisis has made these needs more urgent, she adds, "but our mission and our commitment to serving people remains the same."

As a result, Catholic Charities is adjusting to "this new way of providing services and living," Bryden says. "Everyone is challenged in personal lives, and so are we, providing human services. There are snags, but we're working them out every day."

Bryden joined Catholic Charities in late February, when the coronavirus was beginning to have a significant impact in the state. She was previously

a senior vice president at the Village for Families and Children in Hartford, another community-based service organization.

"It's been an interesting time ... but in some ways it's been fine because I'm happy to just jump right in and do what needs to be done," she says.

Since the coronavirus outbreak, more people are requesting help due to lost jobs, says Marek K. Kukulka, Catholic Charities' chief executive officer. "We've been helping quite a group of people to begin with and now the need seems to have increased."

While some services allow Catholic Charities' staff to work from home, many in-person services are so vital that they must continue that way, Kukulka says. Those services, he adds, require both staff and clients to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) such as masks and gloves.

"One of our programs is a residential program for people with intellectual and developmental



MARINA/GETTY IMAGES

**Donations to the Archbishop's Annual Appeal represent about**

**10%**

**of revenue that Catholic Charities receives.**







**Marek K. Kukulka, chief executive officer, and Liz Bryden, chief operations officer at Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Hartford, discuss operations during the coronavirus pandemic at their office in Hartford.**

disabilities,” Kukulka says, adding that qualified staff must be present in these eight group homes at all times. “That program can never stop operating no matter what. Virus or not, earthquake or anything else, a person with a disability needs people even more.”

While other programs have been curtailed, they have not been abandoned. For example, the two senior centers in Hartford — the Hispanic Senior Center and the South End Wellness Senior Center — were closed in March because seniors as a group are more susceptible to the disease.

“But instead of having seniors coming to the site, we’ve been creating packages of food that were sent once a week to their homes,” Kukulka says. “They relied on lunches or breakfasts when they came to us, and all of a sudden they are unable to come to us, so at least we can provide them with the nutrition they relied upon.”

In addition, Bryden says, staff members have been checking in with seniors, many of whom live alone. “On at least two occasions, we found that seniors were sick and our staff was able to make sure they got connected with medical help so they could get treatment.”

## STAYING CONNECTED

Preschool programs in Hartford, Meriden, New Haven and Waterbury were also closed to protect the more than 400 children ages 3 to 5 who were cared for at the eight locations. “But we haven’t really stopped connecting with the families,

### PHOTOS AT LEFT:

Ki Young Burby, a Catholic Charities staff member who works in the organization’s Cathedral Green supportive housing program, has been busy sewing masks for colleagues and clients.

Catholic Charities school readiness teachers continue to engage the more than 400 3- to 5-year-olds in their care, connecting with families daily and providing parents with educational resources for the home.

Catholic Charities staff members have assisted with delivering food and technology to Hartford public schools students to assist with distance learning.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES

who now home-school or take care of those children,” Kukulka says.

Catholic Charities’ teachers connect with children via electronic media, send those packages of educational material and even drive by their homes on birthdays.

Behavioral health clinics in Hartford, New Haven, Waterbury, Torrington, Ansonia and Milford have also been impacted but continue to function.

“People cannot personally come to the offices, but we’ve quickly transformed or modified the provision of these medical services,” Kukulka says, adding that through tele-health sessions, clinicians can reach out to people who need mental health or substance abuse counseling. “That includes continuation of prescriptions by our providers of medication that is needed for those individuals.”

If someone really needed to see a counselor in person, Bryden says, it could be arranged by following proper PPE guidelines. This has happened at the Waterbury clinic.

Catholic Charities operates seven family centers in Hartford, New Haven, Waterbury and Meriden that address issues such as employment counseling and parenting. Now, many in-person programs are available through videos, including one that gives basic instruction on financial management.

“That instruction otherwise would have happened in person,” Kukulka says. “Now, it’s a video that they can access. So the work continues to be done. It’s just modified in terms of delivery.”

The COVID-19 pandemic is having a powerful impact on people who struggle with the challenges of poverty. Catholic Charities is noticing a significant increase in the number of households reaching out for emergency assistance – food, housing, utilities bills, etc.

“We had to adjust a little bit with social distancing and creating space and some more prepackaging of foods for families rather than have everybody come in,” Kukulka says.

Furthermore, community schools’ staffers work with partners of Hartford public schools to coordinate distribution of meals to ensure middle school students have access to resources they need to be successful with remote learning.

Bryden says she is inspired by the dedication of the Catholic Charities staff, adding, “People are just doing what needs to be done.”



MARINA/GETTY IMAGES

**FOR UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION** on services offered by Catholic Charities, call 1.888.405.1183 or visit [ccaoh.org](http://ccaoh.org).







Jonah Hornak, a student at East Catholic High School in Manchester, displays the masks he produced for Hartford Hospital using the school's 3D printer.

PHOTO BY AARON JOSEPH

# HELPING TO FIGHT *the Coronavirus*

*Students at two Catholic schools make face masks, extenders for front-line medical workers.*

By **SHELLEY WOLF**

**S**tudents at two Catholic schools are doing the work of God and making a positive difference in the lives of others during a global pandemic. "A few people have told me I'm doing God's work, but I don't want to take credit. I'm just doing this to help everybody that I can," says 15-year-old Jonah Hornak, a freshman at East Catholic High School in Manchester.



PHOTO BY AARON JOSEPH

Barry Curcio, a FIRST Robotics Team mentor for East Catholic High School, and student Jonah Hornak show the masks they printed for Hartford Hospital.



A member of the school's FIRST Robotics Team, he has been using the team's 3D printer to make face masks and extenders for Hartford Hospital. So far, he has printed 80 masks out of the basement of his parents' home in Glastonbury, sometimes with the help of his 10-year-old brother, Eli.

At the same time, elementary and middle school students at St. Bridget's School in Cheshire are also making a difference, producing face mask adapters and extenders for UConn John Dempsey Hospital in Farmington and the Hospital for Central Connecticut in New Britain. Many more students have crafted hand-made hearts for Waterbury Hospital.

"I think it's important that we're helping those on the front lines who are saving other people's lives," says 11-year-old Noah Rochefort, a fifth-grader at St. Bridget School. Together with his two teenage brothers, Christopher and Brian, he has used one of the school's 3D printers at the family's home in Cheshire to print mask adapters in assembly-line fashion for UConn Health, which operates John Dempsey Hospital in Farmington.

### INSPIRATION AND INITIATIVE

At the start of the coronavirus, Hornak went from making robot parts for robotics competitions to producing mask parts. He says it all started when his grandmother called to tell him Dr. Chris Wiles, a first-year anesthesiology resident at Hartford and St. Francis hospitals and UConn Health, was going to be on the news.

Dr. Wiles designed an alternative to the N95 masks that health care workers use and was printing them using 3D printers in a garage. When Hornak watched the news, the project captured his imagination.

"Dr. Wiles said, 'I've got all these files on my YouTube page and you can download them yourself,'" Hornak recalls. "My Robotics Team coach asked me the next day if I wanted to take a 3D printer home from school."



Noah Rochefort, center, and his two brothers, Christopher and Bryan, model the mask adapters they made with a 3D printer from St. Bridget School in Cheshire.

**"I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE'RE HELPING THOSE ON THE FRONT LINES WHO ARE SAVING OTHER PEOPLE'S LIVES."**

—Noah Rochefort, a fifth grader at St. Bridget School

Barry Curcio and his wife, Heather, both Robotics Team mentors at East Catholic, were aware of Dr. Wiles and his project to help health care workers at Hartford-area hospitals. They decided to pitch in, so Curcio emailed students, looking for volunteers.

"Jonah was the first to step up," Barry Curcio says. "It was really awesome since he's a freshman. He's reached out multiple times, trying to get info on how to do things. It's really cool to see someone with so much initiative at his age."

During the school year, Hornak had a daily routine of running the 3D printer during the day while he studied online, and again at night while he slept. He says it takes two to four hours to print each mask. He sometimes printed mask extenders, also known as buckles, which help fasten the masks from behind the

head, relieving pressure on the ears.

Hornak then sealed the completed components in bags and delivered them to Dr. Wiles, who inserted filters and assembled other parts and then passed them along as backup masks for the health care professionals at Hartford Hospital.

Barry Curcio says he is impressed by the can-do spirit and community outreach at East Catholic. "This is the third school I've mentored at, and this is the one where the kids want to give," he says.

He's an insurance professional who spends his off-hours coaching kids in robotics through local 4-H programs around the state. He says he shares in community service values himself, and is running another 3D printer at his own home, producing the ear-protecting extenders for area hospitals.



Landon and Sidney St. Onge from St. Bridget School gather and stack completed batches of extenders.

### LARGER SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Students and parents at St. Bridget School in Cheshire turned their contributing efforts into a faith-community family affair. School parents and former parents who work in health care at hospitals and doctor's offices contacted the school for help. Two families were happy to pitch in.

Marilú Rochefort, interim principal for the 2019-2020 school year and a parent of three, connected with UConn Health. "Their goal was to make 20,000 mask adapters for their hospital, so we were trying to do our part," Rochefort says.

UConn Health provided a file, and the Rochefort family — including Noah, Christopher, 14, and Brian, 13 — used one of the school's 3D printers to make a square frame with a peak for the nose that allowed others to put a cloth on it. The Rocheforts printed 175 of these adapters.

"UConn Health just picked up their last batch from us because they met their goal of 20,000," Rochefort says, adding that her sons were thrilled to be a small part of that.

In the assembly line production, all three boys learned how to start the machine, purge it, put in the filament, make sure the plate was level, start production, wait 45 minutes, scrape off the finished

product and hang it on a rod when done. A chime alerted the family when the printing was done, and they each took turns operating the 3D printer. "We printed between 12 and 15 a day," Rochefort says.

The family is simply living out the school's motto, she says, which is based upon the Gospel message of Jesus to "Love one

another as I have loved you." That motto also includes "the goal of empowering each member to serve the parish and community and make a positive difference in the lives of others."

"As a family, we've been helped and now we need to give back," Rochefort says.

### COMFORT AND CHEER

Meanwhile, Lauren St. Onge, the co-president of the Home School Association at St. Bridget School, is another parent who got her whole family involved with a project to help others. Working out of their home in Southington, St. Onge and her daughter Sidney, 10, and son Landon, 8, are using the school's second 3D printer to make mask extenders for health care workers. Those workers contacted Father Jeffrey Romans, pastor of St. Bridget of Sweden Parish and St. Bridget School, looking for help.

"We've given out 500 so far," St. Onge says of the extenders. "We gave them to the Cheshire, Prospect and Wolcott Health Department (called the Cheshire Health District) and to some parents and parishioners who work in hospitals or doctor's offices. We are still making them."

Sidney St. Onge, who is in the fourth grade, hopes the mask extenders will make wearing masks more comfortable for health care staff. "When I go out with my mom, my ears are hurting so much,"

she says of the effect of the mask's elastic bands on her ears. "Hospital staff have this all day long. So when they have extenders, it doesn't hurt as much."

St. Onge says her family received thank you notes and photos from hospital personnel, including those at the Hospital of Central Connecticut. "The kids are excited to see pictures of the mask extenders in use," she adds.

### SPREADING GOOD CHEER

To lift the spirits of the sick, many students at St. Bridget School crafted paper hearts for patients at Waterbury Hospital. An anonymous parent, whose husband works at the hospital, was looking for ways to cheer up patients diagnosed with COVID-19. She asked the students to make hearts with encouraging words to brighten up patients' hospital rooms.

The response was swift and overwhelming, Rochefort says. Students filled a bin outside the school for two weeks with paper hearts that read "Stay strong," "Get well soon," "We can get through this together" and "God bless you."

"It was just to bring happiness and sunshine into someone's room to help them get through it," Rochefort adds. **✪**

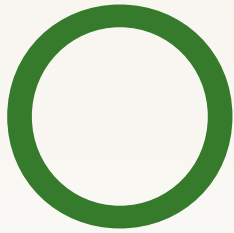


St. Bridget School students crafted handmade hearts to cheer up COVID-19 patients at Waterbury Hospital.



# ST. JUNÍPERO SERRA: *The Apostle of California*

FEAST DAY: JULY 1



On Sept. 23, 2015, Pope Francis canonized Junípero Serra at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington D.C., in front of a crowd of about 25,000. It marked the first time a saint had ever been canonized on United States soil.

Serra was a Spanish Franciscan missionary who was born in 1713 in Petra, Majorca, Spain. He established nine missions in present-day California between 1769 and 1782, including San Diego, San Carlos in Carmel, San Antonio, San Gabriel, San Luis Obispo, San Francisco, San Juan Capistrano, Santa Clara and San Buenaventura. He died at Mission San Carlos in 1784 at age 70, and is buried in the sanctuary of the church.

His canonization sparked controversy, as some objected to some methods he used, such as corporal punishment for those committing offenses, in trying to convert the Native Americans to the Catholic faith. However, at the same time, Serra clashed with Spanish authorities over the way soldiers treated the native peoples.

Pope Francis told those attending the canonization that Serra “sought to defend the dignity of the native community, to protect it from those who had mistreated and abused it. Mistreatment and wrongs which today still trouble us, especially because of the hurt which they cause in the lives of many people.” The pope then met with Native American representatives following the Mass. 🕊



An embroidered banner with an image of St. Junípero Serra is mounted on a movable stand at St. Margaret Mary Church, part of St. Junípero Serra Parish in South Windsor.

PHOTO BY AARON JOSEPH

## *Prayer to St. Junípero Serra*

*O God, who by your ineffable mercy have been pleased through the labors of your priest Saint Junípero Serra to count many American peoples within your Church, grant by his intercession that we may so join our hearts to you in love, as to carry always and everywhere before all people the image of your Only Begotten Son. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

(Courtesy of The Roman Missal)

## *St. Junípero Serra Parish Celebrates Saint with Outdoor Mass* By SHELLEY WOLF



▲ A statue of the Holy Family forms the focal point of a tiny, peaceful prayer garden outside the rectory.

Parishioners at St. Junípero Serra Parish in South Windsor have a new tradition for celebrating their patron saint — an outdoor Mass and parish picnic in September, around the anniversary of the saint’s canonization. This year’s celebra-

tion is slated for Sept. 19, with a Mass at 4 p.m., immediately followed by a picnic at St. Margaret Mary Church.

“This year will be the third year,” says Father David Baranowski, who instituted the Mass and picnic. “We have a flatbed truck for an outdoor Mass. ... And the men and women of the Knights of Columbus and Women’s Club get together and prepare all the food. It’s become something people look forward to.”

To further honor the saint, the priest acquired an embroidered banner with an image of St. Junípero Serra, which is mounted on a modified flag pole stand that can be moved wherever it’s needed, such as near the font for Christian initiations. “It’s nice that our founder is there,”

he says. He has also distributed prayer cards of the saint to parishioners.

With the motto “We are baptized to serve and celebrate,” St. Junípero Serra Parish was founded in 2017 through the merger of St. Margaret Mary and St. Francis of Assisi churches, with two worship sites. Since joining the parish that year, Father Baranowski said he was most impressed by parishioners’ commitment to help the poor. They prepare sandwiches and serve food at the ImmaCare Shelter for the homeless in Hartford.

Father Mathieu Isaac, formerly the parochial vicar at Saint Teresa of Calcutta Parish in Manchester, will become the temporary administrator of Saint Junípero Serra Parish, effective June 8.





ABOVE: The head of the pharmacy made Robyn Jennings a dress with locally-made West African fabric.



AT LEFT: Emily and Jack Jennings get a hug from Beatrice, a woman in Ghana, who helped the family with household chores and getting acquainted with the culture.

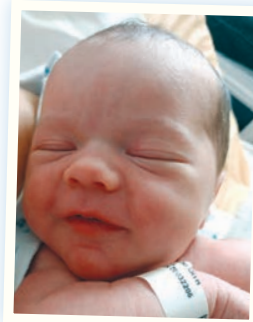
# Grateful FOR GOD'S Gift of Life

*Mission doctors count their blessings for safely returning home.*

By SHELLEY WOLF | Photos COURTESY OF THE JENNINGS FAMILY



Two Connecticut doctors were just beginning a medical mission in Ghana in West Africa, when the first cases of the coronavirus hit and the country went into lockdown. Worried about getting access to food and the newfound feeling that foreigners were no longer welcome, Robyn and Brian Jennings decided the best thing for their family was to return home. And they are grateful that they did.



Sophia Grace was born on March 30, after the family arrived in Connecticut.

“Our journey has reminded me to be grateful for God’s gift of life and to trust him more completely,” Robyn says. “We ask for prayers as Brian returns to work in the U.S. and we discern the next steps in God’s plan for our family.”

The doctors and their family flew home in late March after cutting short a three-year commitment for Mission Doctors Association in Ghana that began in January.

“When we left, there were only a few confirmed cases in the capital,” Robyn says. “However, the country instituted travel restrictions and stay-at-home orders as soon as the first cases arrived, so these were already in place for a few weeks before we left.” The couple did not treat any COVID-19 cases.

Once the coronavirus hit, the price of food shot up and foreigners who left the hospital compound were suddenly made to feel unwelcome. The family got on a list for possible flights back to the United States and were notified of their acceptance during dinner one night, with just hours to pack for a flight leaving the next day.

“We worried about social unrest and food insecurity, and we agreed that the safest thing for our family was to go,” says Robyn, who was expecting her third child and was near her due date. “We felt returning to Connecticut was the safest thing for our children.”

Returning home turned out to be a blessing in disguise. The family left on March 28, a few days after Robyn’s due date. They endured the 35-hour trip home and had one day to rest before Robyn’s new addition came into the family.

“I was sad to leave our community and ministry in Ghana,” Robyn says. “However, we are happy to share that our third child was born on March 30 soon after we arrived in the U.S. Sophia Grace is now a joy for our family.”

Robyn, who experienced some post-pregnancy complications, says she was grateful to be in the United States where she received the best possible treatment.

“If we hadn’t decided to get on that plane, I might not be here today,” she admits. “I am reminded to never take life for granted, never lose focus on the important things, and always seek to be in God’s will, because his plans may be incomprehensible but are always best.”

Still, the Jenningses relish the time they spent in Ghana. Brian and Robyn, who grew up in Norwalk and Suffield, met at UConn School of Medicine, then married and decided on a career in international medicine. Last year, they accepted an assignment for the Mission Doctors Association.

“When we arrived in Ghana the first week of January, we received a warm welcome from the community at Anfoega Catholic Hospital,” Robyn says. “Brian began helping out in the adult medical ward, and I cared for the patients admitted to the neonatal intensive care unit and pediatric unit.”

Their two children, Emily, 4, and Jack, 2, adjusted well, attending the Catholic school at the hospital compound. In addition to spending mornings at the hospital, the two physicians also helped in an outpatient clinic and in the emergency room. “As expected, the lack of resources made caring for patients more challenging. We often had to be creative, for example, making wound dressings out of household supplies,” Robyn says.

Today, the growing Jennings family is staying with Brian’s parents. “We are spending time with family in New Canaan, and interviewing for jobs in the U.S. by phone,” Robyn says.

In the meantime, they are counting their many blessings, both spiritual and physical. Brian says, “I am grateful for all the prayers for my family and for my wife.”



The Jennings celebrate Easter back in New Canaan.

# MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** At press time, the events listed here were scheduled. For questions, call the phone numbers or check the websites provided for each event.



## ROOTED IN FAITH, OPENING WIDE OUR HEARTS

On **July 8**, 7 p.m., the Office for Catholic Social Justice Ministry of the Archdiocese of Hartford will continue its virtual conference series with a 60-minute webinar, "Racism without Racists." The presenter is Christopher Doucot, founder of the Hartford Catholic Worker Community, adjunct instructor of sociology in several local universities, where he has taught race, class, nonviolence, and the author of *No Innocent Bystanders*. This presentation will include the origins of race

in colonial America and its present-day consequences, explain how racism is more than individual acts motivated by prejudice and suggest concrete steps toward achieving racial justice. The webinar is free and open to the public. Advance registration is required and available at [catholicsocialjustice.org](http://catholicsocialjustice.org).

## MALTA HOUSE OF CARE'S WONDER WOMEN CLASS OF '20

Malta House of Care has rescheduled the Wonder Women Class of '20 event to **Oct. 21**, 6 to 8:30 p.m., at the Hartford Marriott Downtown Hotel. All proceeds will support the Malta House of Care Mobile Medical Clinic, an independent nonprofit that provides free primary care to the uninsured adults on a van that goes to four Hartford-area neighborhoods each week. For more information and to R.V.S.P, visit [malthouseofcare.org/wonder-women-20](http://malthouseofcare.org/wonder-women-20).

**REGISTER WITH YOUR PARISH:** If you have been attending the same parish but have not registered, now is the time to do so. Becoming a member allows your parish the ability to reach out to you and let you know about upcoming events, and prayer and volunteer opportunities. All registered parishioners will also receive a copy of the *Catholic Transcript*, mailed free 10 times a year. Call the church office to register and officially join your church community.

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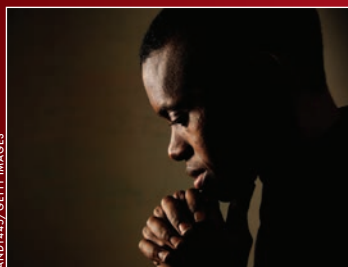
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How Can I Stay Close to God and One Another Right Now?



AUDOMIRILLO/GETTY IMAGES

How to Get the Most Out of Mass Online



ANDY445/GETTY IMAGES

Listen for God's Whisper Each Day



PHOTO BY TOM GENNARA

Look For Small Doors That The Holy Spirit Opens to Share Your Faith



COURTESY OF THE JENNINGS FAMILY

Grateful for God's Gift of Life

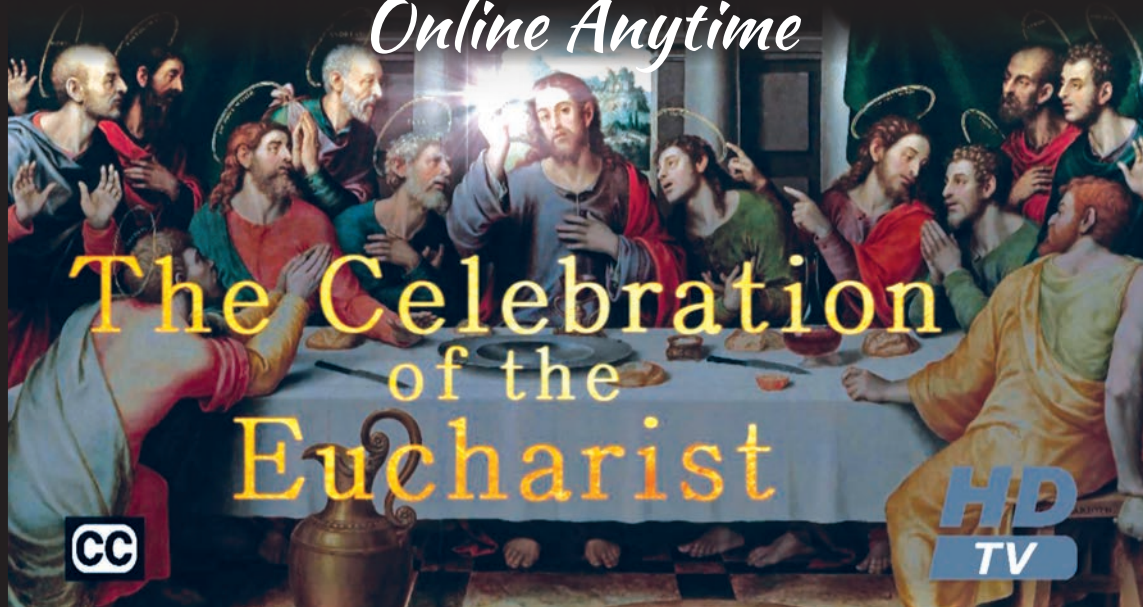


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## HOW TO REPORT AN INCIDENT OF SEXUAL ABUSE TO THE ARCHDIOCESE OF HARTFORD

If you have knowledge or suspect that a minor or vulnerable adult (an adult with an intellectual disability) has been sexually abused, in any manner, by personnel of the Archdiocese of Hartford, you are urged to report this information to:

**Kathleen D. Nowosadko, Victim Assistance Coordinator**  
860-541-6475 • [kathleen.nowosadko@aohct.org](mailto:kathleen.nowosadko@aohct.org)

Incidents involving sexual abuse of minors (persons under the age of 18) should be reported to: **State Department of Children and Families**  
Care-line 1-800-842-2288

Incidents involving sexual abuse of vulnerable adults aged 18-59 should be reported to the: **Connecticut Department of Developmental Services – AID Division for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities**  
1-844-878-8923

Incidents involving sexual abuse of vulnerable adults aged 60 and over should be reported to: **Department of Social Services for the Elderly**  
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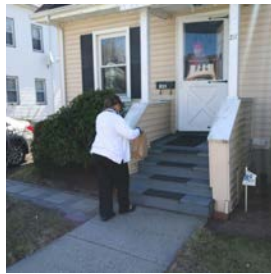


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